

THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST

Heart Throbs of Our Church Leaders

XXXII. THE PLACE OF THE BRETHREN CHURCH IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD

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The year nineteen-hundred and thirty opens in the midst of religious confusion. On every hand there is uncertainty. The ancient apologists were certain of the uniqueness and supremacy of our Christian faith. Their modern successors are not so sure, modestly asking only that Christianity be regarded as one religion among the other religions, each having its own peculiar advantages. Religion, they say, can no longer be divided into "True" and "False," for such absolute distinctions are illusory; all is relative. Even Protestantism, lured by the mirage of world redemption through social and political expedients, becomes every day more willing to join hands with the enemies of her Lord. Within Protestantism, where old landmarks are fast disappearing, three tendencies may be discerned.

First, there is a tendency which exalts Christian doctrine and is careless of Christian living. Leaders guilty of grossest sin are excused by the plea that they are great defenders of the faith.

Second, there is a tendency which exalts Christian living and disregards Christian doctrine. Leaders holding the most shocking heresies are excused on the ground that they are "doing so much good in the world."

Third, there is a tendency in which adherents of the first two unite in either belittling or ignoring the ancient ordinances established by our Lord. The one gets rid of them by asserting that they were not given for the Church; the other by declaring them of no consequence to the Church.

As usual, the danger of these tendencies lies not in their affirmations, but in their denials. And the need of the hour in Protestantism is for a movement which will combine the affirmations and scuttle the denials. More than any other existing group, THE BRETHREN CHURCH is fitted to lead such a movement.

The Brethren Church believes in all the great fundamental doctrines of historical Christianity, and that Christian living can issue only out of Christian faith.

The Brethren Church believes that Christian living is the only valid evidence of Christian faith, and that the greatest enemy of Christ is the man who says "I believe" while disregarding the holy demands of Christian faith.

The Brethren Church believes that the ordinances were established by our Lord Jesus Christ to perpetually teach sound doctrine and holy living, and that everything in Christianity is of consequence.

The very confusion of the religious world constitutes a great opportunity for the Brethren Church. Let us determine, by God's Grace, that we will not be led astray by one-sided emphases, that we will yield none of our great affirmations, but that in season and out of season we will teach "the whole counsel of God,"—the Christian Doctrines, the Christian Precepts, the Christian Ordinances—giving to each element its own divinely ordained place.

The candle-stick of such a Church will never be taken away by him who walks in the midst of the seven gold candlesticks, and whose eyes are as a flame of fire.

